

EXHIBIT 26



HENRY McMASTER
GOVERNOR

February 21, 2018

Mr. Reid Lehman
Executive Director
Miracle Hill Ministries
P.O. Box 2546
Greenville, South Carolina 29602

Dear Mr. Lehman:

I appreciate Miracle Hill contacting me regarding concerns over its license as a Child Placing Agency (CPA) with the Department of Social Services (DSS). I applaud Miracle Hill's long-standing history of serving one of our most vulnerable populations, foster children. Faith-based partnerships are an important part of foster care services in our state, and I welcome faith-based organizations' leadership in addressing these critical needs.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requires DSS to run its foster program according to set federal standards and DHHS reserves the right to recoup monies paid to the State in the event of non-compliance. A last-minute regulation pushed through by President Obama's administration on January 11, 2017 attempted to change these standards. However, to serve as a CPA, Miracle Hill should not have to deny its religious beliefs. The licensing and participation of faith-based entities in the state foster care system is a constitutionally-protected practice.

Yesterday, my staff met with Beth Williams, Vice President of Children's Ministries at Miracle Hill, and reaffirmed my support for upholding religious freedom in our Country. Additionally, my office is already working with DHHS to obtain a waiver of requirements that adversely affect religious entities. It is important that religious organizations not be required to sacrifice the tenets of their faith in order to serve the children of South Carolina.

Please be assured that I am committed to protecting religious freedom and to ensuring that Miracle Hill continues serving our State's foster children.

Yours very truly,

The signature of Henry McMaster, Governor of South Carolina, written in blue ink.

Henry McMaster

HM/rkt

cc: Director Susan Alford, South Carolina Department of Social Services